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## ABSTRACT

This study examined postschool vocational options for people with disabilities in New South Wales (Australia), by means of a survey and interviews with representatives of government agencies, tertiary education facilities, and unions and employer organizations. Results indicated a lack of vocational facilities for young people with severe disabilities and a pressing need for effective programs to encourage employers to include people with disabilities as potential employees. Specific results and recommendations are reported for the following areas: (1) employer attitudes toward employing people with disabilities; (2) employment of people with disabilities in an environment of high general unemployment; (3) profile of competitive employment agencies for people with disabilities; (4) interagency cooperation to avoid duplication of approaches to employers; (5) community attitudes towards the employment of young people with disabilities; (6) parents and service providers working together for the benefit of the worker with a disability; (7) vocational options for people with severe disabilities; (8) development of work-related behaviors; (9) staffing of vocational facilities for people with disabilities; (10) financial disincentives of government benefits; (11) participation of people with disabilities in training schemes available for young people in general; and (12) the role of the school in preparing young people with disabilities for adult life. Questionnaires and the interview schedule are appended. (DB)

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UNIT FOR REHABILITATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

# A Study of the Range and Variety of Postschool Options for People with Disabilities

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**UNIT FOR REHABILITATION STUDIES**

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

North Ryde New South Wales 2113 Australia Phone (02) 88-9530

Telegraphs & Telex: MACQUNI AA22377 Fax: (02) 887-4752

NSW, 2109, Australia. (02) 805-8706

Ms B. Bowyer,  
Director, Disability Services  
Co-ordination Unit,  
Premier's Office,  
State Office Block  
Macquarie Street,  
SYDNEY, NSW, 2000.

Dear Ms Bowyer,

I have pleasure in submitting to you the report, A Study of the Range and Variety of Postschool Options for People with Disabilities.

This report, which is a sequel to the report, The Short Term Postschool Experiences of People with a Range of Disabilities, commissioned by the Disability Council of NSW, highlights some of the difficulties which people with disabilities may face when seeking to enter the workforce.

It is obvious that state and federal governments, together with nongovernment agencies, are attempting to provide additional, appropriate services that will help to meet the vocational and postschool educational needs of these people. Nevertheless, much remains to be done if people with disabilities are to achieve real equity in employment in opportunities in NSW.

Many people contributed to and assisted in the collection of data which formed the basis of the report. The willing assistance of the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability and the Association of Rehabilitation Facilities is gratefully acknowledged, together with that of those numerous government and nongovernment agencies that gave their time freely in responding to the questionnaires and interviews.

The skill and expertise of the senior investigator, Marie Knox, ably assisted by Deborah Gold, contributed significantly to the success of the project. The realisation of the recommendations of the report would be ample reward for the efforts for all the contributors.

Yours sincerely,

TREVOR R. PARMENTER, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor.

January 31, 1989.



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A STUDY OF THE RANGE AND  
VARIETY OF POSTSCHOOL OPTIONS  
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Unit for Rehabilitation Studies  
School of Education  
Macquarie University  
New South Wales 2109 Australia  
1989

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the postschool vocational options for people with disabilities in New South Wales. Government agencies providing vocational services to young people in general, representative samples of private generic employment agencies, and agencies providing services specifically for people with disabilities were surveyed on various aspects of their services relevant to young people with disabilities. Staff from several tertiary education facilities in New South Wales and from unions and employer organisations were questioned regarding their provisions for young people with disabilities. As well, representatives from several of these agencies were interviewed regarding many of the primary findings from the surveys.

Results from the study provide a thorough analysis of the vocational options for young people with disabilities currently available in New South Wales. Amongst others, the results indicate a lack of vocational facilities for young people with severe disabilities and a pressing need for effective programs to encourage employers to include people with disabilities as potential employees.

On the basis of the results of the study, several recommendations are made for both policy development and service provision to help maximise the vocational opportunities for young people with disabilities.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In the general transition from school to work and adult living area there have been some recent interesting individual developments in vocational options for young people with a disability. Some of the developments have been initiated by the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health and the NSW Department of Health, others by The Department of TAFE and other tertiary institutions.

However, there are no comprehensive data which document the level of access to these programs by young people with disabilities. Little is known about the range of disabilities these programs cater for, the numbers of referrals, the acceptance criteria, the acceptance and rejection rates, the types of jobs the young people are performing, the level of support provided and the training received, as well as the range of jobs obtained by people graduating from a program. Neither has much attention been paid to eliciting the benefits accruing to a young person from attending a particular program. As well, little is known of impediments which may exist for clients in gaining and maintaining appropriate vocational placement. It is vital such information is obtained both to document the extent to which these programs are being used by client groups and to assist in further directing policy development for postschool provisions for young people with a disability. Such information is also essential in planning programs for young people with disabilities to assist in their smooth transition from school to adult life.

The results of a recent investigation, "The Short Term Postschool Experiences of People with a Range of Disabilities", carried out by the Unit for Rehabilitation Studies has further highlighted this need. This study examined the postschool experiences of a sample of people with a variety of disabilities.

Findings from this study included:

- i) the majority of the sample studied considered having a job as being very important;
- ii) there was a general lack of awareness by respondents of those vocational programs which are available;
- iii) despite some attempts to cater for those with severe disabilities, the definition of "severe" is frequently being loosely interpreted so that those with quite challenging training and behaviour management problems are not being catered for adequately in the current mosaic of services.

Therefore, the objectives of the present study were:

1. To investigate and document the number of employment and/or preemployment programs operating for young people with disabilities in NSW.
2. To document the numbers of young people with disabilities who are accessing these programs.
3. To document their specific disabilities.
4. To document the acceptance/rejection criteria of these programs.
5. To investigate the range of jobs the programs place people in and the level of support available to maintain them in employment.
6. To investigate potential impediments to successful job placement.
7. To investigate and recommend possible alternative postschool programs to work placements.



## CHAPTER TWO

## METHOD

In order to obtain as extensive an information base as possible, contact was made by the researchers with the following:

1. Government agencies providing vocational services to the youth population in general.
2. Private generic employment agencies
3. Agencies providing vocational services specifically to persons with disabilities.
4. Tertiary education organisations.
5. Employer and trade union organisations.

Draft questionnaires for use with organisations providing programs specifically to persons with disabilities and with private generic employment agencies were devised. A meeting was convened with representatives from the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) and the Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (ARF). These representatives provided valuable assistance in guiding the research by commenting on the draft questionnaires, suggesting organisations to contact and discussing issues which might be examined. They also agreed to publicise the study in their newsletters to alert member organisations of its purpose and the benefits to emerge from it. A copy of this publicity is contained in Appendix A.

The draft questionnaires and interview format were subsequently examined by several colleagues and modified in light of their comments and those of the representatives from CID and ARF. Copies of the final formats of these instruments are included in Appendix A.

1. Government Agencies Providing Vocational Services for Young People in General

The following agencies were contacted, either by telephone or in person, to obtain information on vocational services provided by them to young people in NSW. They were then asked to indicate the appropriateness of these services to young people with disabilities and the extent to which this population avails itself of these services.

- . Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training
- . Australian Public Service
- . NSW Department of Industrial Relations and Employment
- . NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- . NSW Public Service
- . NSW Department of Technical and Further Education
- . a small sample of universities and colleges within NSW
- . a small sample of employer and trade union organisations

Many lengthy and fruitful discussions were held with officers from these agencies and their time and interest are acknowledged.

## 2. Private Generic Employment Agencies

A stratified random sample of 44 private generic employment agencies listed in the Sydney yellow pages directory was identified and the agencies subsequently contacted and interviewed by telephone. Unfortunately, private generic employment agencies operating in country areas of NSW were not included in the study. This point should be borne in mind when interpreting the results of the survey. The sample was stratified according to the type of employment the agency was concerned with seeking. The numbers contacted in each stratum are presented in Table 1. As can be seen from this table, the majority of these agencies dealt with employment of office staff or other white collar occupations. Most agencies served 2 functions. The first of these was to find a job in a specialised field for an applicant. The second was to find a group of job applicants for a client company in a particular field.

Table 1: Description of the sample of private generic employment agencies surveyed

| Type of Position Catered for                      | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Office support staff (e.g. secretarial, clerical) | 16     | 36         |
| Computer staff (e.g. word processing, data entry) | 5      | 11         |
| Management (senior executive)                     | 1      | 2          |
| Hospitality                                       | 2      | 5          |
| Banking   | 3      | 7          |
| General (all types of occupations)                | 4      | 9          |
| Labour  | 4      | 9          |
| Architectural                                     | 2      | 5          |
| Legal   | 2      | 5          |
| Accountancy                                       | 5      | 11         |

## 3. Agencies Providing Vocational Services Specifically to People with Disabilities

These organizations were located by contacting:

The Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health

The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service arm of this department was asked to provide locations, telephone numbers and names of executive officers of the then 19 units of the service in NSW. It is noted with regret that since the inception of this study, 2 of these units, Work Preparation Centres for young people with mild intellectual disabilities, are being closed. A sample of five of these units, including both the abovementioned Work Preparation Centres, was identified as representing both city and country regions.

A listing of nongovernment organisations receiving funding from this department (including Demonstration Projects) was obtained from the Disabilities Program section of this department. A stratified random sample of 117 of these organisations was identified. The sample was stratified, as far as possible, according to geographic location.

#### NSW Department of Health

The following divisions of this department were contacted.

##### Physical Disabilities Service

It would appear that no vocational programs are directly operated by this division. Clients considered in need of vocational services are usually referred to the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service.

##### Mental Health Services

A listing of the locations, telephone numbers and regional coordinators was obtained from the central office of this division. Each region was then contacted to both discuss the provision of mental health services in the region and to determine the vocational services (both government and nongovernment) for young people with a mental health disability within the region, so that the researchers could then, in turn, follow up each of these services.

##### Developmental Disability Services

To obtain information on these services, a similar procedure to that adopted for mental health services was used.

Twentytwo Department of Health organisations, again stratified as closely as possible according to geographic location, were identified.

Additionally, a vocational facility operated by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, and another by a nongovernment organisation receiving funding from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, were located and included in the study.

Thus a sample of 146 organisations resulted, representing a wide range of vocational services for people with disabilities throughout NSW. Details of the sample are provided in Table 2. Managers of these organisations, or their representatives, were interviewed by telephone. This procedure, rather than a mailed questionnaire, was used to increase the participation rates by organisations and to maximise the amount of information obtained.

Table 2: Types of organisations providing vocational services specifically for people with disabilities

| Types of organisation               | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Private organisation                | 117       | 80         |
| NSW Department of Health            | 22        | 15         |
| Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service | 5         | 3          |
| Other                               | 2         | 2          |

Following the conducting of the interviews with agencies providing vocational options to young people in general, and those providing vocational options to young people with disabilities, seven representatives from the following organisational types were invited to participate in a personal interview to discuss some of the trends emerging from the data. A copy of this interview schedule is provided in Appendix A. These representatives were from the following organisations:

- . Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
- . Australian Quadriplegic Association
- . Eastern Suburbs Services for the Developmentally Disabled
- . Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training
- . NADOW
- . Challenge Foundation, Hornsby
- . Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services

#### 4. Tertiary Education Organisations

The senior education officer from the Department of Technical and Further Education was contacted and issues surrounding the provision of appropriate technical and further education for young people with disabilities were discussed extensively. Information regarding labour market programs available to young people in general was obtained and examined in particular reference to their applicability to young people with disabilities. Further, a copy of the report, "TAFE and People with Disabilities", by Jack Sach and Associates, was obtained from the Department of Community Services and Health. Information gained from this report supplemented that supplied by the above services.

In addition, staff from four colleges and universities, from both city and country areas, were contacted to enquire of the numbers of students with disabilities attending their institutions and the services available to them.

#### 5. Employer and Trade Union Organisations

Staff from the Labour Council of NSW and the Employers' Federation of NSW were contacted to determine their policies on issues concerning the employment of people with disabilities.

## CHAPTER THREE

## RESULTS FROM THE SURVEYS

These results are organised according to the first 6 objectives of the study outlined above. To reiterate, these objectives were:

1. To investigate and document the number of employment and/or preemployment programs operating for young people with disabilities in NSW.
2. To document the numbers of young people with disabilities who are accessing these programs.
3. To document their specific disabilities.
4. To document the acceptance/rejection criteria of these programs.
5. To investigate the range of jobs programs place people in, and the level of support available to maintain them in employment.
6. To investigate potential impediments to successful job placement.

Each objective is then discussed according to the provisions made by:

1. Government agencies providing vocational services to young people in general
2. Private generic employment agencies
3. Agencies providing services specifically to people with disabilities

The provisions made by tertiary education facilities for young people with disabilities and the policies of the employers and trade union organisations are also discussed in this section.

Booklets, pamphlets and other relevant written material obtained during the course of the study are included in Appendix B.

#### OBJECTIVE 1: EMPLOYMENT AND PREEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN NSW

##### Government Agencies Providing Vocational Services to Young People in General

###### 1. Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training

This department operated several programs to help young people in general obtain employment. An essential thrust of this department is to help young people gain employment and thus avoid the necessity of obtaining or remaining on government benefits. Several of its programs are described below.

### i) Australian Traineeship System

This program began in July, 1985. Traineeships offer structured vocational training for young people 16-18 years of age in nontrade areas. Traineeships are usually of 1 year's duration. Trainees are recruited primarily through the Commonwealth Employment Service. Thirteen weeks "off-the-job" training is funded by the department and usually takes place in TAFE facilities. The remainder of the training is provided by the employer, who is paid \$1,000 for accepting a trainee. However, as an incentive to accept young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged youth, employers are paid an additional \$1,000. Youth considered to be disadvantaged are those from migrant or aboriginal backgrounds, those with a disability, and youth who have been unemployed for an extended period of time. Employers can also receive \$2,000 to make modifications to the workplace necessary to accommodate a trainee.

Officers from this department maintained, however, that there was a perception among employers that disadvantage was equated with poor quality. Employers need to be alerted to the benefits they may gain from broadening their base of potential employees to include those with a disadvantage. A committee has, therefore, been formed with representatives from the traineeship branch, the client services branch of the department, and TAFE, to address this issue and to ensure that disadvantaged client groups, including those with disabilities, have access to employment opportunities similar to those enjoyed by their nondisabled peers.

For the financial year 1986-87, disadvantaged youth held only 11 percent of the total number of traineeships. The department's goal in the initial stages of the scheme was to instigate and establish the scheme firmly before attempting to incorporate young people with disabilities or other disadvantaged youth. At the time of writing, however, the department was aiming to have 15 percent of traineeships held by young people with disabilities or other disadvantaged youth.

As the scheme grows, it is expected that the Australian Traineeship System may prove to be an effective means by which young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged youth can gain employment. However, it may be advisable, not only for this scheme but for others operated by the department, for the department to consider the needs of the people from each of the categories comprising the general "disadvantaged" group, both for statistical and service provision purposes. The needs of young people with disabilities may be, for example, vastly different from those from a migrant background or who have been unemployed for a substantial period of time.

### ii) Jobstart

Jobstart is a wage subsidy paid by the department to an employer for the first 26 weeks of an employee's employment. It is not aimed specifically at young people, but at people who have been unemployed for a considerable time, or who have a particular disadvantage in gaining employment. Thus, to be eligible, one must:

- . register with the Commonwealth Employment Service
- . have been unemployed for 6 of the last 9 months, or
- . have a disadvantage in gaining employment, i.e. be a member of one of the disadvantaged groups specified above

It is interesting to note that from February, 1988, only one of the specified disadvantaged groups are able to participate in the scheme.

iii) Several schemes aimed specifically at assisting young people obtain employment have recently been instigated. Within these schemes, special consideration is given to young people with disabilities or other disadvantage. These schemes are:

#### Youth Employment Schemes

The department offers short vocationally oriented courses, usually of 17-26 weeks duration. Courses are conducted primarily in local TAFE colleges and are aimed specifically at meeting the needs of both local employers and job-seekers. The Commonwealth Employment Services conducts the recruiting for these courses, and priority is given to young people with disabilities or those from other disadvantaged groups.

#### Job Search Training Courses

These are short, locally conducted training courses for young people centred around developing job search skills. Priority again is given to young disadvantaged people.

#### Job Clubs

In these groups unemployed people are given assistance in conducting job searches. These clubs also will be conducted in local communities to facilitate access to them by unemployed people.

#### iv) Commonwealth Employment Service (CES)

This service provides the major source of assistance for young people with disabilities within the department. In the December 1987 quarter, 1466 people with a disability in NSW were registered with the CES. Yet there are only 27 employment counsellors working in CES offices throughout NSW to assist people with disabilities in employment issues. These counsellors are well-trained in employment issues relevant to their local area. However, their training in disability issues is quite limited. Moreover, especially with the impact of the Disability Services Act (1986), the services which can be provided by these 27 staff, despite all their efforts and intentions, are less than optimal. More staff and more staff training are urgently required.

#### v) Nongovernment Projects Funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Training

As well as providing its own programs, this department also allocates funds to the following nongovernment organisations concerned with assisting people with disabilities gain appropriate vocational placement. These organisations are:



- NADOW which provides intensive clerical and computer skills training for people with primarily physical disabilities.
- CARE which provides vocational courses for people with disabilities conducted through a Sydney hospital auxiliary.
- HUMAN RESOURCES CENTRE which provides a work preparation program for young people with mild intellectual disabilities.

Thus the Department of Employment, Education and Training provides a variety of programs to assist young people gain access to employment. Further, there is a recognition that there are special groups of young people requiring extra assistance in accessing employment. However, apart from the Commonwealth Employment Service, and the provision of funding to some private organisations, this department does not focus specifically on the needs of young people with disabilities. It has a wider classification of disadvantaged youth which incorporates migrants, aborigines, people with disabilities and long-term unemployed people. Therefore, there is little information on the appropriateness of the measures to assist young people with disabilities gain employment, or on the level to which this population is actually accessing these programs.

Further, while there is much valuable information available regarding the nature of these programs, there is little information regarding their effectiveness, i.e. there is little information as to exactly how many young people gain employment as a result of these programs. Perhaps, as many are only recent innovations, the evaluation of these programs will be incorporated as an essential component.

Additionally, while this department provides assistance to young people with disabilities to obtain employment, it does not appear that any support is given to assist the young person maintain a position. This is an area the department may wish to examine further, as research suggests that young people with disabilities frequently have more difficulties maintaining a position than they do in obtaining a position. Perhaps the department could play a more active role in this regard to ensure that these young people not only obtain a position, but also maintain it.

## 2. NSW Department of Industrial Relations and Employment

### i) The Specialist Section

This section is staffed by 4 psychologists and provides a vocational assessment and counselling service for people with disabilities aged 14 years and over, and their families. On the basis of this assessment, the person is referred to an appropriate agency for assistance in developing vocational skills and/or in gaining appropriate employment. Agencies frequently used by this service are the CES, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service or various specialised job placement services. It should be emphasised that this section does not provide a job placement service.



## ii) The Adviser to the Hearing Impaired

This section offers specific help for those with a hearing impairment in gaining employment. Vocational counselling, as well as a job placement service, is provided. As well, arrangements can be made through this section for apprenticeships and/or further training at TAFE colleges.

The section also provides an interpreter service at job interviews for those people requiring it. Indeed, staff in this section maintain that a severe shortage of skilled interpreters is restricting the services it can provide, and advocate a greater availability and publicity of courses in interpreting.

No other disability is catered for in such an intensive manner by this department as is hearing impairment. It would seem inequitable that people with disabilities other than hearing impairment are not given this same service. While the services offered to young people with hearing impairment is laudable, the means to offer a similar service to young people with other disabilities needs to be examined.

## iii) Special Placements Program

Until recently, this program was administered by the State Public Service Board. However, with the abolition of the Board early in 1987, responsibility for the Special Placement Program was given to this department.

The Special Placement Program was formalised in 1985 to assist people whose disability would affect their performance in the base grade clerical examination. Instead of an examination, suitable applicants are given a 3-months work trial period. If suitable, and if a permanent position is available, the applicant would then be placed in permanent employment.

Unfortunately, the scheme extends only to those wanting base grade clerical positions. The means to apply a similar scheme across other positions in the NSW Public Service should be examined.

The program also targets a number of apprenticeships for youth with disabilities. For these people, the same requirements are made as for nondisabled youth, i.e. Year 10 education and 4-year indentured apprenticeship. However, applicants do not need to take the initial examination. Rather, selection of suitable applicants is based on interview.

Currently 20 apprenticeship positions for young people with disabilities have received funding. Sixteen of these apprenticeships are being administered by the program, while the remaining 4 (still for young people with a disability) are part of the general apprenticeship intake.

The program also administers the Technical Equipment Scheme. This scheme has a relatively small budget (approximately \$50,000 per annum). Under it, departments are able to apply for purchase of equipment considered essential for the person with a disability to perform his/her job.

It is gratifying that the Special Placement Program, previously available through the Public Service Board, has not been lost following the abolition of this Board, and that people with disabilities continue to be provided with these facilities, albeit through another arm of the Public Service.

However, whilst the program was administered through the Public Service Board, an extensive evaluation of the Special Placements Program was conducted. The report of this evaluation completed in February, 1987, still, unfortunately, remains in draft form. Thus the results of this survey and the many recommendations contained within the report are generally not available.

Interestingly the Department of Industrial Relations and Employment has been asked to nominate a representative and to have considerable input into a recently formed Committee led by the Disabilities Services Coordination Unit to examine access to employment by people with disabilities.

### 3. NSW Department of Family and Community Services

#### i) The Adviser to the Visually Impaired

This service originally came under the auspices of the Department of Industrial Relations and Employment. However, several years ago responsibility for this service was passed to the Department of Family and Community Services.

The service offers specific help for people with a visual impairment in gaining employment. Vocational counselling, as well as job placement services are provided by its 2 staff members. Again, a similar service is not provided by this department for people with other disabilities, and the means to provide such a service should be examined.

The staff members attempt to visit visually impaired students 2 or 3 years prior to their leaving school to help in their transition from school to working and adult life. However, it was commented, these visits are becoming increasingly difficult to carry out now that so many students with visual impairments are attending regular, rather than special schools. There are now many more schools to attend and still only 2 staff members to carry out these visits. As well, difficulties have been experienced in actually identifying and locating students with a visual impairment attending regular schools. It appears that once attending a regular school these students are "lost" and many necessary support services unable to be given to them.

### 4. Australian Public Service

Until recently, clerical administrative and administrative service staff were recruited to Australian Public Service departments through the Commonwealth Public Service Board. To ensure that people with disabilities were not disadvantaged by the selection procedure itself, Special Placement Officers modified the administration of a selection test

to meet the needs of individual applicants with a disability. For example, the selection test for a person with a hearing impairment would be administered in a small, quiet room with the tester speaking very clearly. Employment within a public service department was then sought to suit the person's disability. Departments would, in turn, be required to make a reasonable adjustment, if necessary, to a job to accommodate the person with a disability.

However, as a result of the Block report, the Commonwealth Public Service Board has been abolished and staff recruitment is now carried out by the Department of Employment, Education and Training, primarily through the Commonwealth Employment Service offices. As outlined above, however, the resources of these offices are strained with the increasing numbers of people with disabilities, because of other government initiatives using their services. Moreover, departments now have to pay \$450 for each placement made to them. Thus department staff now feel they want high quality staff and that a person with a disability does not meet their expectations. One comment was made to the effect that a particular department paid \$450 and "all we got was someone with a walking stick". This situation is not advantageous to people with disabilities obtaining access to employment opportunities and it does indeed seem unfortunate that the facilities provided by the Special Placements Officers appear to have dissipated.

The Australian Public Service also operates the Technical Equipment for Disabled Commonwealth Employees Program. This program provides funding for equipment and/or workplace modification to meet the needs of an employee with a disability. In 1986-87, \$45,000 was allocated to this program. Types of equipment purchased under this program include equipment to magnify documents and to translate documents into speech output for visually impaired staff, and telephone typewriters where typewritten messages can be passed over the telephone for hearing impaired or speech impaired people. From 1986 departments have been encouraged to meet half the costs of equipment valued at \$5,000 or more. It is to be hoped that this financial obligation does not act as a disincentive for departments to consider people with disabilities as potential employees.

##### 5. Equal Employment Opportunity Facilities with State and Australian Public Services

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment in the NSW Public Service has, as one of its aims, to increase the representation of people with disabilities in all positions and at all levels of the public service. It has recently issued guidelines to assist departments in the employment of people with both physical and intellectual disabilities. These guidelines cover such aspects as:

- . community liaison
- . selection and placement procedures
- . worksite modification
- . conditions of service
- . staff development and training

Information is disseminated and staff development sessions conducted frequently on various issues regarding employment of people with disabilities.

Similarly, the Equal Opportunity Bureau in the Commonwealth Public Service also aims to increase the representation of people with disabilities in all levels of the public service. It has issued similar guidelines and conducts various staff development and information dissemination sessions on employment issues of people with disabilities.

In mid 1987 this Bureau was instrumental in instigating a pilot strategy, the Intellectual Disability Access Program (IDAP). This program was piloted in the ACT and Victoria in 1987-88 and aimed to place 10 mildly intellectually disabled applicants in each region. Advisory groups with representatives from community industry, relevant unions, employing departments and self-advocacy groups considered such matters as the suitability of vacancies put forward by participating agencies, the nature of any necessary supervision and the means of monitoring an individual's progress. It will be interesting to see whether such a facility may be extended to NSW and other states.

#### Private Generic Employment Agencies

Those agencies surveyed are used only to a minimal degree by young people with disabilities. Indeed only 20 young people with disabilities had accessed the services provided by the 44 agencies surveyed. Moreover, only very low percentages of this small number of young people were able to be placed. No agency employed staff specifically to cater for the vocational needs of people with disabilities.

Agencies stated they provided support where they were able. Examples of the support provided to help a person maintain a job were:

- one job was altered to cater for a deaf person (phone work was eliminated from the job)
- one agency trained a partially sighted person in word processing so that her skills were more marketable
- one agency convinced a doubtful client company to maintain a disabled person in employment

In fact, to many staff from these agencies the notion of their catering for the needs of people with disabilities was a novel one.

While private employment agencies provide an extensive vocational service to the population in general, they are used to a very limited extent by people with disabilities. With the advent of more people with disabilities entering the open employment market, perhaps these agencies are an under-utilized resource and should be encouraged and supported to play a greater role in this regard.

### Agencies Providing Services Specifically to People with Disabilities

Fortyone percent of those organisations described themselves as a sheltered workshop. Twentyeight percent described themselves as operating several vocational options for their clients. These options consisted of on-site traditional sheltered employment, work crews and supported open employment to some of their more competent employees. Fourteen percent maintained they operated an adult training centre, three percent each a work preparation program and an independent living skills program, six percent a supported open employment program, and four percent operated a mobile crew option only.

Table 3: Types of vocational programs specifically for people with disabilities

| Type of Program           | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Workshop                  | 60        | 41         |
| ATC                       | 20        | 14         |
| Work preparation          | 5         | 3          |
| Supported open employment | 9         | 6          |
| Crew                      | 6         | 4          |
| Several options           | 40        | 28         |
| Independent living        | 4         | 3          |
| Other                     | 2         | 1          |

Fiftyfive percent were located in the Sydney area. This area extended from Katoomba in the west, Cronulla in the south and Hornsby to the north. Seven percent were located in the south of the state, defined as east of the Great Dividing Range and south of Cronulla. Seventeen percent were located in the west of the state, defined as west of the Great Dividing Range, while twentyone percent were located in the north of the state, defined as east of the Great Dividing Range and north of Hornsby.

Table 4: Geographical locations of vocational services specifically for people with disabilities

| Location      | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Sydney        | 80        | 55         |
| Southern area | 10        | 21         |
| Northern area | 31        | 21         |
| Western area  | 25        | 17         |

It would appear in all locations that most organisations are offering either sheltered employment or a variety of vocational options to their workers. Many of these organisations outline their attempts to conform with the "new" models detailed in the recently enacted Disability Services

legislation. Some of their workers were employed in crews 2-3 days per week, leaving the workshop and carrying out jobs in the community, e.g. house cleaning, lawn mowing, gardening. Some organisations were attempting to place and provide support for their workers in local competitive employment, as well as maintain an on-site supported employment option.

Independent living skills programs were provided primarily by NSW Department of Health facilities and focussed in the main on catering for those clients with severe disabilities. Many of these workers had been rejected as unsuitable by nongovernment organisations. The resources of these services were stretched to their limits and many could provide programs and facilities for their workers on a part-time basis only. Further, many workers with severe disabilities had no program to attend. The provision of part-time services, although considered undesirable, was the only means by which the maximum number of workers could be catered for. Even then, the needs of many workers with severe disabilities were not being met. Not only was this an inequitable situation for these workers, but it also placed considerable strain on family members who were left to try to meet this need for their young person. This contention is supported by the following statement contained in the recently released Report of the Developmental Disability Sub-Committee of the Ministerial Implementation Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disability. Reporting to the NSW Minister for Health, this sub-committee stated: "Additional day programme units are required to meet the habilitation, training and vocational needs of persons with developmental disabilities. The lack of day programme services has been cited as one cause for industrial discontent among Fifth Schedule Hospital staff involved in the relocation of clients to the community" (p.9 Ministerial Implementation Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disability. Report to the Minister for Health of the Developmental Disability Sub-committee, November, 1988).

Some Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service facilities saw themselves as providing a work preparation program, while others viewed their functions as providing several vocational options dependent upon the needs of the worker. Other organisations provided a workshop option, a work preparation option and a crew option.

Staff from organisations were asked to give their definition of a successful placement for the workers they were catering for. A wide variety of responses was received, perhaps indicating a diversity of opinions of "success", dependent upon worker needs and goals of individual organisations. The most commonly given definitions were to participate in open employment, to move to a higher status vocational option (e.g. bench work to member of mobile crew), to enjoy the work being performed and to achieve the goals set at program planning meetings. Less frequently given definitions were to carry out work in the community, to perform "real" work, to maintain a job for a specified period of time, and to integrate into the community.

Table 5: Definitions of a successful vocational placement given by services specifically for people with disabilities

| Definition                   | Frequency* | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Open employment              | 28         | 13         |
| Perform job independently    | 49         | 22         |
| Move on to "improved" option | 26         | 12         |
| Enjoy job                    | 33         | 15         |
| Work in community            | 10         | 4          |
| Achieve set goals            | 27         | 12         |
| Sustained employment         | 12         | 6          |
| Performing "real" work       | 15         | 7          |
| Community integration        | 10         | 4          |
| Other                        | 11         | 5          |

\* Some respondents gave more than one definition

Staff were also asked to indicate the major benefits they felt workers gained from participating in their program. The major benefits perceived by staff were an increase in self-esteem, an opportunity to learn vocational and work-habit skills, the provision of a satisfying and fulfilling activity, the opportunity to make friends and to integrate into the community. These benefits were expressed by staff from the range of vocational options surveyed. Other less frequently mentioned benefits were the opportunity to gain a job, the development of independent living skills and the community's recognition of the worker's work.

Table 6: Stated benefits accruing to clients attending vocational programs specifically for people with disabilities

| Benefit                   | Frequency* | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Increase self esteem      | 73         | 18         |
| Work skill training       | 73         | 18         |
| Work habit training       | 56         | 14         |
| Fulfilling occupation     | 51         | 13         |
| Help gain "open" jobs     | 37         | 9          |
| Make friends              | 44         | 11         |
| Community integration     | 45         | 12         |
| Independent living skills | 13         | 3          |
| Recognition by community  | 8          | 2          |

\*Some respondents gave more than one benefit

Thus services provide the social benefits to be gained from work just as frequently as the vocational or work-related benefits. This emphasis on the social rewards of work has obvious implications for service providers in assisting young people with disabilities gain employment. Service providers must look beyond simply ensuring that a young person with a disability is able to perform a job competently. They must also ensure that the job itself is satisfying to the individual and that friendship and other social networks are able to be made.



## OBJECTIVES 2 AND 3: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SERVED BY THE PROGRAMS

Government agencies providing vocational services to young people in general

### 1. Department of Employment, Education and Training

#### i) Australian Traineeship System

For the financial year 1986-87, disadvantaged youth constituted only 11 percent of the total trainee population. It is not known how many of these disadvantaged youth were young people with disabilities, although it is suspected that the proportion would be very small. As indicated earlier, this system is a relatively recent innovation and the Department's initial concern was to instigate and stabilise the traineeship system. Now it aims to have 15 percent of traineeships filled by young people with disabilities or other disadvantaged youth.

#### ii) Commonwealth Employment Service

In the December, 1987, quarter in NSW, 1466 people with a disability were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. Of these, 494 were placed into employment - a placement rate of approximately 34 percent. At the time of writing, more recent figures were not available because of an embargo imposed by this Department.

Young people with disabilities gaining employment with the assistance of these government agencies in general had rather mild disabilities. Many employees with disabilities, staff maintained, had either a sensory disability, or a mild physical or intellectual disability.

As described earlier, young people with disabilities are considered to be part of a larger group of disadvantaged youth. This composite group, however, should be divided into its component parts with each being serviced separately. If data were kept separately for each, meaningful information could be gained on the effectiveness of these programs not only for young people with disabilities, but also for those other young people considered disadvantaged.

### 2. Department of Industrial Relations and Employment

Programs in this Department seem to be lacking in adequate documentation of types and number of people accessing their programs. Staff indeed recognise the need for these data as a means of assisting the evaluation of the programs. However, they maintain that with a heavy workload and no clerical support, record keeping is very difficult to maintain. Such evaluation strategies need to be incorporated in the Department's programs.



Special Placements Program staff could not give data on the numbers of people with disabilities. However, it is expected that this information would be available in the draft report mentioned above, but currently not generally available.

### 3. Australian Public Service

At the time of writing the most recent figures available of people with disabilities recruited through the Special Placement System are those for the year 1986. Figures on the number of these people accessing the Service through the Department of Education, Employment and Training were not available. In 1986, 412 people with disabilities were placed into Clerical Administration Class I or Clerical Assistant Grade I positions. This figure represented 5.2 percent of all appointments to these positions. Unfortunately, information was not available as to how many of these were young people, i.e. aged 16-20 years.

A Community Employment Program survey of 770 staff with disabilities employed in the Australian Public Service indicated that most staff with disabilities were clustered in the base grade positions and were dissatisfied with the apparent slowness of promotion. This finding was supported by a Service-wide Equal Employment Opportunity Survey in 1986 which found that people with disabilities progress more slowly than other staff, who have equivalent length of service and educational qualifications and come from the same geographical location. As a result, on average they earned lower salaries than other people in the same occupational group with similar lengths of service and qualifications.

The most commonly reported disabilities were:

- . hearing loss
- . difficulty in walking or using stairs
- . partial or total loss of ability to use arms or hands
- . conditions causing difficulty in using normal furniture
- . conditions requiring long term medication
- . inability to read normal size print
- . speech impediments
- . disabilities requiring the use of a wheelchair

It should be noted, however, that in general many of these agencies do not pay attention to maintaining accurate records on individuals accessing their services. Such records must be maintained for effective service delivery and program evaluation.

### Private Generic Employment Agencies

Exact numbers of young people with disabilities accessing these agencies were not available as many of these agencies did not keep information on this aspect of their service. Indeed, meeting the vocational needs of people with disabilities was a very minor role, if a role at all, in their overall business.

Only approximately 20 young people with disabilities had accessed the services provided by the 44 agencies surveyed. These young people had a variety of disabilities, including the following:

- problems with reading and writing
- slow to understand instructions
- wheelchair bound
- limited mobility (e.g. missing limbs, need calipers to walk)
- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- speech impediment
- arthritis
- behaviour/emotional problems
- dwarfism
- spinal injuries
- poliomyelitis
- cerebral palsy
- epilepsy

However, only very low percentages of this small number of young people were able to be placed.

#### Agencies Providing Vocational Services Specifically to People with Disabilities

Eightyfive percent of organisations surveyed catered for one to twenty workers aged between 16 and 20 years, while 11 percent catered for 21 to 40 workers in this age group. All vocational options showed a similar pattern of catering for relatively small, although significant numbers of young people with disabilities.

Table 7: Number of clients aged 16-20 years in vocational programs specifically for people with disabilities

| Number of clients | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 - 20            | 124       | 85         |
| 21 - 40           | 18        | 11         |
| 41 - 60           | 1         | 1          |
| 61 - 80           | 2         | 2          |
| 81 - 100          | 0         | 0          |
| 101 - 120         | 0         | 0          |
| 121 - 140         | 1         | 1          |

Staff from organisations were asked to nominate the disabilities of those workers they were serving who were aged between 16 and 20 years. The vast majority of organisations indicated that these workers had a variety of disabilities, including intellectual disability, visual and hearing impairment, and emotional disturbance. Thus organisations viewed themselves as providing for young people with a range of disabilities and not just a single disability population. This pattern was found across all vocational program options. Indeed, some organisations could not answer this question as the type of disability, they maintained, was not of importance to them.

Table 8: Frequency of disability catered for in 16-20 age group in services specifically for people with disabilities

| Disability                       | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Autistic                         | 1         | 1          |
| Mild intellectual disability     | 12        | 8          |
| Moderate intellectual disability | 3         | 2          |
| Severe intellectual disability   | 5         | 3          |
| Physical disability              | 2         | 1          |
| Emotional disturbance            | 7         | 5          |
| Visual impairment                | 2         | 1          |
| Severe disabilities              | 97        | 67         |
| Other                            | 3         | 2          |
| No information                   | 14        | 10         |

#### OBJECTIVE 4: ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA OF THE PROGRAMS

##### Government Agencies Providing Vocational Services to Young People in General

An important condition for acceptance into the special provisions made under these programs is the demonstration of the presence of a disability or other disadvantaging condition. Proof of a disability usually comes by means of documentation from a doctor, special school, regular high school, or other relevant authority. If the condition is considered not sufficiently disabling, the individual's application is considered along with other nondisabled applicants.

A second condition for acceptance into one of these programs is motivation on the applicant's part, both to access the program and to gain employment.

The applicant's suitability for appointment is usually discussed at an interview and arrangements made, if necessary, to modify any further testing procedures. The criteria for acceptance of people with an intellectual disadvantage in previously discussed IDAP program summarizes most adequately the criteria for acceptance of people with disabilities into these programs. "They will need to be able to demonstrate a range of social and work skills and capacity to perform the duties of the job concerned efficiently with no more than routine supervision, and be able to meet ordinary standards for both health and character generally applicable to appointment to the Service" (p.10 Equal Opportunity Report 1986-87)

##### Private Generic Employment Agencies

There were no specific criteria for acceptance by these agencies other than the ability to perform the job. As indicated earlier, these agencies were accessed by very few people with disabilities and, as such, the means for meeting the vocational needs of people with disabilities in general had not been addressed.

### Agencies Providing Services Specifically to People with Disabilities

The criteria for acceptance into these programs were generally quite stringent. The majority of organisations had several criteria which an individual must meet before he/she could be considered for the program. The most prevalent of these criteria were a mild or moderate degree of disability, lack of challenging behaviours, ability to travel to workplace, receipt of the invalid pension, and age of at least 18 years. Because of their inability to provide transport, many organisations had to insist that clients be able to reach their place of work independently, or that their family or care-givers provide this transport. Transport problems were particularly acute in many outlying rural areas. Very few agencies had a sole criterion for acceptance. Of these few, the type of disability was the most frequently indicated. Six organisations indicated they did not know what the criteria were.

Table 9: Acceptance criteria of organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Criterion                | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age                      | 2         | 1          |
| Residence                | 3         | 2          |
| Type of disability       | 18        | 12         |
| Degree of disability     | 4         | 3          |
| Several criteria         | 107       | 74         |
| Other                    | 6         | 4          |
| Did not know/no criteria | 6         | 4          |

Hence it would appear that organisations are quite selective in the workers whom they employ, with limited provision being made for those with severe disabilities and challenging behaviours. Many staff indicated they do not have the resources nor the expertise to cater for the needs of these more difficult workers and, while they recognised dire need in this area, felt there was little they could do. These workers were frequently referred to the local Department of Health office who, as earlier indicated, could not always meet this need.

These agencies were asked the number of referrals they had received in the previous 12 months and the source of these referrals. Many organisations indicated the difficulty they found in supplying this information, as they did not keep formal documentation on this aspect of their organisation. A significant number of staff had to rely on their memories for this information. Thus results in this section should be viewed with this in mind.

Quite a significant finding was that 21 percent of the organisations indicated they had received no referrals of young people aged 16- 20 years in the last 12 months. A further 52 percent had received 10 or fewer referrals during the same period. The majority of organisations received referrals from several sources such as the local developmental disability services team, the person's family, or church organisations. Interestingly, only one percent was self-referred. Almost all the young people involved came through a mediating agency.

**Table 10:** Number of referrals received by organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Number of referrals | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| None                | 30        | 21         |
| 1 - 10              | 77        | 52         |
| 11 - 20             | 20        | 15         |
| 21 or more          | 19        | 13         |

Twentyfour percent of organisations indicated that their sole source of referrals was the local special school, thus indicating quite a close relationship between these organisations and the school. Students usually had their work experience at the facility provided by the organisation and then proceeded to full-time employment with that organisation. The majority of these organisations were places of sheltered employment, thus lending some support to Tuckerman's (1987) assertion that many special schools are limiting their vocational programs to preparing their students for work in sheltered employment only. This finding also highlights the need for a more adequate system of transition education planning.

**Table 11:** Sources of referrals for 16-20 year age group of organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Source              | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Self referral       | 2         | 1          |
| Family              | 10        | 7          |
| School              | 35        | 24         |
| Government agencies | 11        | 8          |
| Several sources     | 52        | 36         |
| Other               | 2         | 1          |
| Not known           | 34        | 23         |

The majority of organisations accepted between 1 and 10 percent of the referrals made to them. Interestingly, 18 percent did not accept any of their referrals. A major reason for rejecting referrals was that there were no vacancies in the program. Others, because of the fairly stringent criteria outlined above, were considered not suitable.

Sixty percent of organisations indicated that nobody aged between 16 and 20 years left their organisation during the last 12 months, while a further 34 percent indicated that fewer than 10 percent left during the same period.

The organisations indicated that this lack of mobility was present across all age ranges: that indeed, especially in sheltered employment facilities, there was an extremely limited number of vacancies because their clients did not move on. There appears to be not the same mobility in their population as there is in the nondisabled workforce. Of those who did leave, most left because they found another job, they did not like the program, or because they and their family moved from the area.

Fortyfive percent of the organisations indicated they had a waiting list of people wanting to use their services, with most lists having between 1 and 20 names on it. However, it should be noted that the reason many organisations gave for not having a waiting list was not that there was not a need in the community for their services, but simply because they considered they were not able, within the foreseeable future, to expand their services to provide for additional clients.

Table 12: Organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities with a waiting list

| Waiting list | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes          | 65        | 45         |
| No           | 74        | 51         |
| Don't know   | 7         | 5          |

Table 13: Number of names on waiting list

| Number of names | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 - 10          | 30        | 46         |
| 11 - 20         | 20        | 31         |
| 21 - 30         | 6         | 9          |
| > 30            | 5         | 8          |
| Don't know      | 4         | 6          |

#### OBJECTIVE 5: JOBS PERFORMED BY YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE AGENCY TO MAINTAIN PLACEMENT

##### Government Agencies Providing Vocational Services to Young People in General

Young people with disabilities have been placed in a wide variety of jobs with the assistance of staff from these programs. Factory hand, stores work, clerical work, shop assistant, various positions in the computer industry, as well as apprenticeships in many trades, were given as examples of jobs obtained by young people with disabilities. However, it was stated on many occasions that people with disabilities generally are promoted less frequently than their nondisabled coworkers. This lack of advancement was considered to be due primarily to employers grossly underestimating the abilities and vocational skills of their employees with disabilities.

This finding is supported by the Community Employment Program Survey of Staff with Disabilities employed in the Australian Public Service. This survey revealed that most employees were frustrated with the lack of job opportunities. This lack of opportunities was felt to be due, in part at least, to discrimination on the basis of disability. Yet, it was maintained

the disability may not affect work performance nor require special equipment or assistance. All that was required in many cases was a commonsense understanding of the particular disabling condition. These findings indicate an urgent need for policies and programs to promote increased employer and staff awareness of issues surrounding the employment of people with disabilities. It is pleasing to note that Equal Employment Opportunity staff in both NSW and Australian Public Services are expending considerable efforts in this regard although, as staff from these services readily acknowledged, there is still much work to be done.

It is unfortunate to note that the Special Placements Program within the NSW Public Service is limited to placement in base grade positions, or to a restricted number of apprenticeship positions. It would be most advantageous for people with disabilities if this program were expanded to cater for placement in other positions available in the service.

Little formal structured support similar to that provided by most Competitive Employment and Training Programs is provided to help young people with disabilities maintain their job. The support of Equal Employment Opportunity staff, however, is available for those working in government positions or, in some cases, larger nongovernment organisations or statutory authorities. As indicated earlier, research shows that many young people with disabilities have more difficulties maintaining a position than they do in actually obtaining it. The means of assisting young people with disabilities to maintain their positions in an area requiring close attention by staff.

#### **Private Generic Employment Agencies**

Although placements of young people with disabilities were quite few, they tended to occur primarily in white-collar occupations. Jobs in which placements occurred were accounting, data entry, secretarial, labouring and management.

No formal support was given to people with disabilities to assist them to maintain their jobs, although in isolated cases some advice has been given to an employer on how to modify the work environment to meet the needs of a person with a disability.

#### **Agencies Providing Services Specifically to People with Disabilities**

##### **i) On-site Supported Employment**

Seventyone percent of organisations indicated some or all of their workers aged between 16 and 20 years were involved in this type of employment, with 90 percent of these catering for up to 20 workers. The majority of these workers were involved in performing contract work. Significant proportions of workers were involved in woodworking, outdoor work (e.g. car washing or grounds maintenance), or independent living skills programs. Others were involved in laundry work or in other business ventures operated by the organisation (e.g. biscuit-making, craft work). It should be noted that in several organisations many workers were involved in a variety of these tasks. Managers rotated workers to ensure variety of work for the workers.



## ii) Mobile Work Crews

Twentytwo percent of organisations indicated some or all of their workers aged between 16 and 20 years were involved in mobile crew work. However, 94 percent of these organisations indicated that 10 or fewer of their workers were involved in this option and very few of the workers performed this work on a full-time basis. Most worked in a crew for 2 - 3 days per week and at other times were engaged in on-site supported employment. The most common types of work performed in this option were gardening and lawn-mowing. Other work performed was car-washing, carrying out odd jobs for people in the community, and maintaining essential equipment.

Table 14: Employment engaged in by workers in organisations specifically for people with disabilities surveyed

| Employment                   | Frequency* | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| On-site supported employment | 103        | 71         |
| Mobile work crews            | 32         | 22         |
| Job-site training            | 3          | 2          |
| Supported open employment    | 23         | 16         |
| Unsupported open employment  | 3          | 2          |

\* Some workers were involved in more than one type of employment

## iii) Job-site Training

Three organisations (or 2 percent) indicated they used job sites in local industry to prepare their workers for open employment. The jobs performed by these workers were factory hand, kitchen hand, and sales assistant. These sites were not viewed as providing a permanent job for a worker, but as a means of training workers in appropriate work skills. Following training, workers were assisted to find full-time open employment.

## iv) Enclave

Of the organisations surveyed, none was operating an enclave as a means of providing permanent employment for all or some of its workers.

## v) Supported Open Employment

Sixteen percent of organisations indicated they provided support and training for some or all workers to carry out a job in open employment. The majority of these jobs were factory hand or farm hand positions. Other jobs indicated were kitchenhand, cleaner, shop assistant and clerical work.

A number of these organisations, however, reported that frequently their workers left the job after a few months and returned to the agency for another job. Additionally, some of their workers were employed on a job for a fixed length of time (usually 2 - 3 months) and returned to them once this time had expired. Perhaps this pattern is not so different from the employment pattern of their workers' nondisabled peers.



vi) Unsupported Open Employment

Two percent of organisations indicated that some of their workers were in open employment and no longer needed their support. These agencies were concerned with persons with a nonintellectual disability. The types of jobs these people were engaged in were factory, clerical or kitchen work.

Wages Received by Workers With Disabilities

The results of this survey reveal that payment to workers with disabilities using the services of organisations providing vocational services to people with disabilities is still extremely low. These workers work 30-35 hours a week for frequently only sufficient money to cover their fares and clothing. In seven percent of organisations, workers receive no pay at all, 13 percent received less than \$10 per week, while 30 percent received between \$10 and \$20 per week. Thus, in half the organisations surveyed, workers received no more than \$20 per week.

Table 15: Wages received by workers aged 16-20 years in organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Wage                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| < \$10                   | 19        | 13         |
| \$10 - \$20              | 43        | 30         |
| \$21 - \$35              | 23        | 16         |
| \$36 - \$50              | 10        | 7          |
| \$51 - \$100             | 6         | 4          |
| < \$100                  | 13        | 9          |
| No wage                  | 11        | 7          |
| Information not provided | 21        | 14         |

Fourteen percent of organisations either did not know the average weekly wage of these young workers, or were unwilling to disclose it. Workers in only 9 percent of organisations were receiving \$100 per week or more. These organisations were conducted by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service where a training fee was paid, or they were organisations placing and training their workers in competitive employment.

Thirtytwo percent of the organisations surveyed charged their worker a fee, usually from \$10 to \$30 per week. The majority of organisations charging fees were conducting adult training centres or vocational and independent living skills programs operated by the NSW Department of Health. These organisations disliked charging any fee and considered it ethically wrong that a person has to pay to come to work. However, with limited financial resources, this was the only way the organisation could remain financially viable. Interestingly, those who charged fees in general paid their workers no wages at all or, at most, a minimal wage.

Table 16: Organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities charging a fee

| Charge fee | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes        | 17        | 32         |
| No         | 99        | 68         |

Table 17: Amount of weekly fees charged

| Weekly fee charged   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| < \$10               | 9         | 19         |
| \$10 - \$29          | 26        | 55         |
| \$30 - \$49          | 4         | 9          |
| No information given | 8         | 17         |

Twenty-nine percent of organisations indicated they had a worker-staff ratio of more than one to ten. Thirty-nine percent (primarily from adult training centres and NSW Department of Health facilities) had a ratio of one to five or less. Almost all organisations indicated their support was to train the person in the job and then to provide adequate supervision. Forty-nine percent did not consider the support they were able to give their workers was adequate, primarily because they could not provide adequate training opportunities. Other reasons given were that they could not expand the service, they could not provide the required follow-up to workers in open employment, and that their staff was insufficiently trained to meet worker needs. Those who maintained that their level of support was adequate indicated that their workers were happy and could perform their jobs without supervision. These organisations also relied on the services of more competent workers and of volunteers to provide necessary support. Without the volunteers, or if these workers were to move to more challenging and undoubtedly more appropriate work options, the level of support provided may indeed be inadequate.

Table 18: Worker to staff ratios in organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Ratio      | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1:1 - 1:2  | 9         | 6          |
| 1:3 - 1:5  | 48        | 33         |
| 1:3 - 1:10 | 34        | 23         |
| < 1:10     | 42        | 31         |
| Unknown    | 13        | 9          |

Table 19: Perception of adequacy of staff ratio and support in organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities

| Adequacy    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes         | 72        | 49         |
| No          | 67        | 46         |
| Do not know | 7         | 5          |

## OBJECTIVE 6: IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCCESSFUL JOB PLACEMENT

### Government Agencies Providing Vocational Services to Young People in General

A major impediment to successful job placement in these services was the perceived reluctance on behalf of some employers and staff in government departments to employ people with a disability or other disadvantage. Frequently employers and staff in government departments were unwilling to bear additional costs in modifying the work environment to meet the needs of a person with a disability even though, in many cases, financial subsidies were available to assist in this regard. However, more importantly, there was an overriding impression that disability was equated with poor quality. For example, one government department complained, after paying \$450, they received "someone with a walking stick". Further, despite additional financial incentives offered by such schemes as Jobstart or the Australian Traineeship System, many employers were still reluctant to employ young people with a disability or other disadvantage.

Staff concerned with the placement of people with disabilities into jobs, using the services of the Commonwealth Employment Service, expressed the following concerns:

- Sometimes the person with a disability can be deterred at the counter of the Commonwealth Employment Service
- A "creaming off" process occurs in the CES. Often a person with a disability is not seen as the best prospect for a job.
- Sometimes people with disabilities are not able to cope with the "bureaucracy" of government departments.
- Staff shortages and workload restrict the support needed by people with disabilities to help maintain their jobs.
- While there are now very few physical barriers, there are still many attitudinal barriers to people with disabilities, both on the part of employers and the wider community.

Several initiatives have been taken to ameliorate these difficulties. A committee with representatives from both the Australian Traineeship System and the Client Services branches of the Department of Education, Employment and Training, and from the Department of TAFE to address the urgent need for employer education. Staff in NSW and Australian Public Services have issued guidelines both to encourage and assist departments in the employment of people with disabilities. These staff also conduct workshop sessions for staff, both with and without disabilities, on this issue.

An additional impediment is the increasing trend towards employing people in integrated work settings. In this situation workers do not have a specific job, but rather are expected to perform many different jobs within the one setting. This multi-skilling can lead to increased problems in matching a person with a disability to an appropriate job.

The move towards more young people with disabilities attending regular high schools has led to some agencies experiencing difficulties in accessing these students and providing them with appropriate information on, among other things, the relevant vocational options available to them. The establishment of a data base of people with disabilities attending high schools, as well as the development of a transition planning process for young people with disabilities, would prove to be most beneficial in this regard.

### **Private Generic Employment Agencies**

The major problem agencies perceived in placing young people with disabilities in appropriate vocational settings was the agency's need to comply with the employer requirements. Employers paid a substantial fee to the agency and almost invariably gave very specific directions as to the type of person required. Agencies felt obliged, therefore, to adhere to these directions. Again, people with disabilities were not seen as the best quality person for the job. Some comments made by agencies in this regard were:

- employers are not enthusiastic about having a disabled person because of additional expense involved
- employers often have very few jobs which they feel would be suitable for people with disabilities
- employers pay a fee to obtain suitable applicants. Therefore only the "best" person is wanted for the job. This person is rarely seen as a person with a disability
- employers perceive extra problems in the areas of superannuation, excessive absences and workers compensation if they employ a person with a disability
- employers still have the ability to circumvent anti-discrimination laws

While the need to comply with employers' requests was the most prevalent impediment, other problems outlined by these agencies were:

- lack of people with disabilities who apply for jobs through these agencies
- many small businesses lack the financial resources to spend on facilities for people with disabilities
- employers were concerned there may be additional safety problems in work places where people with disabilities were employed
- there is a lack of facilities available to assist employers to cater for the needs of people with disabilities

### **Agencies Providing Services Specifically to People with Disabilities**

The most frequently indicated impediment across all vocational program options, was the lack of adequate funds. Insufficient funds were available both to meet the increasing demand for services by workers and to

conform to funding guidelines detailed by the Department of Community Services and Health. The per capita funding formula recently announced by this department was of particular concern for many organisations. Those who expressed particular concern were staff from adult training centres who maintained this would be insufficient to meet the needs of many of their more severely disabled workers. Staff from supported open employment programs who did not generate any income for themselves, yet placed young people with disabilities in open employment, thus saving governments from considerable expenditure on pensions and other welfare benefits, also expressed this concern. Another impediment frequently mentioned by all vocational program options was the characteristics of the workers themselves. Characteristics such as lack of speed, poor social skills, and unreliability, were cited as reasons why these workers could not cope in an alternative employment setting, and to why places of supported employment were difficult to operate as viable business propositions.

Table 20: Stated impediments to workers gaining and maintaining appropriate vocational placement by organisations providing services specifically to people with disabilities

| Impediment                          | Frequency* | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Community attitudes                 | 31         | 12         |
| Client characteristics              | 53         | 20         |
| Employer attitudes                  | 14         | 5          |
| Family opposition                   | 23         | 9          |
| Competition among service providers | 5          | 2          |
| Lack of funds                       | 59         | 23         |
| Transport problems                  | 16         | 6          |
| No opportunity to practice skills   | 11         | 4          |
| Low pay                             | 16         | 6          |
| High local unemployment             | 35         | 13         |

\* Some respondents gave more than one impediment

Other impediments indicated were negative community attitudes towards people with disability and the high unemployment rate in the local community. Impediments mentioned less frequently were negative employer attitudes, lack of cooperation from the worker's family, competition among service providers, transport difficulties, lack of opportunities for workers to practise skills, and workers' low wages. A similar pattern of impediments was shown across all vocational program options.

There was a wide variety of suggestions made by staff from the organisations to overcome these impediments. The most frequently made suggestion (25 percent) was the provision of more funds to enable services to expand their program, to provide a better quality service and to assist in following the guidelines detailed in the Disabilities Services Act of 1986. Eighteen percent of organisations indicated the need for both parent and community education on the rights of people with disabilities to participate in the community, the needs of adults with disabilities and the requirements of the Disabilities Services Act. A further 15 percent suggested a greater emphasis is needed on training in vocational facilities

to improve both the skills and opportunities for workers. Other suggestions centred around job creation and employer education programs, programs to improve workers' job habit skills, a greater emphasis on staff training, the provision of staff to seek appropriate community placements for workers, and the need for cooperation among various agencies concerned with a worker's welfare.

Table 21: Suggestions to overcome impediments by organisations providing services specifically for people with disability

| Suggestion                     | Frequency* | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Government understanding       | 19         | 9          |
| Job creation programs          | 18         | 8          |
| Employer education             | 15         | 6          |
| Provision of liaison staff     | 15         | 6          |
| Interagency cooperation        | 4          | 2          |
| Parent and community education | 41         | 18         |
| Staff training                 | 13         | 6          |
| Increased job habits training  | 11         | 5          |
| Increased vocational training  | 35         | 15         |
| Increased funds                | 56         | 25         |

\* Some respondents gave more than one suggestion

## TERTIARY EDUCATION FACILITIES

### Technical and Further Education

TAFE in NSW, similar to other states, acknowledges in its policy that the TAFE system should promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities and provide the least restrictive physical and policy environment to enable them to participate in TAFE courses. People with disabilities are, in the main, placed in regular classes and given necessary support via consultants. Within NSW there are 34 teacher/consultants, with consultants for the intellectually and physically disabled (16), learning impaired (14), and visually impaired (5), distributed through the state. It would seem with the large overall mainstream and increasing numbers of young people accessing TAFE facilities (2244 in mainstream courses in NSW and 2560 in special courses) that the services provided by these consultants are indeed stretched.

This problem will become even more acute following the transfer of the training function of adult training centres to the TAFE system as required by the Disability Services legislation. Often people attending these programs have quite severe disabilities. TAFE's experience with people with more severe disabilities is limited and it would appear that quality services for this group have not been developed. While it is recognised that, at least in the short term, TAFE does not have the staff expertise nor the resources to adequately perform such a role, it is nevertheless imperative that TAFE address the issue of how best it can meet the needs of those people with more severe disabilities. It is inequitable that, while

TAFE espouses a philosophy of providing lifelong technical and further education to all those requiring it, the needs of a significant group from the community are not being addressed. Perhaps TAFE might need to broaden its guidelines from strictly vocational to include leisure, recreation and community living skills programs which may be more applicable to this group of people.

It is interesting to note that while TAFE has a policy of including students in the mainstream courses wherever possible, frequently students are not so convinced that this is always the best option. Sach and Associates (1988) interviewed a small group of students with disabilities and found that this issue generated the most interaction and conflicting ideas. The findings by Sach and associates on this issue are reproduced here to demonstrate that the issue of mainstreaming or segregation is indeed quite a complex issue and perhaps demands more attention by TAFE personnel.

#### Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Mainstream and Special Classes for People with an Intellectual Disability

##### MAINSTREAM CLASSES

###### Pros

learn to get along with others

make new friends

teacher's pet because you're different

get to learn more from others

###### Cons

don't learn enough

feel

unwelcome

feel stupid being a bit too slow

don't get enough attention

feel stupid if you keep asking questions

##### SPECIAL CLASSES

###### Pros

you can ask for more help

more chance to get work done

work at slower pace

more privacy

more attention

more teasing

###### Cons

get teased by being in a "special class"

classes always interrupted

not treated as seriously as other classes

(From Jack Sach and Associates (1988) TAFE and People with Disabilities. Final Report)

##### Colleges and Universities

In general these institutions reported relatively small numbers of students with disabilities. Policies regarding services for students with disabilities had either recently been formulated or were in the process of being formulated.



It appears that formal concern for the needs of students with disabilities is only a relatively recent phenomenon.

Attempts are made to obtain special equipment and/or to ensure ease of access for students with disabilities. Further, attempts have been made in some cases to assist teaching staff in more readily meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

### Employer and Trade Union Organisations Labour Council of NSW

The Labour Council of NSW issued in 1988 a policy on workers and disabilities regarding:

- . open employment
- . supported employment
- . wages
- . rehabilitation
- . job placement
- . unionisation

The policy basically recognises the right of people with disabilities to equal opportunities to vocational options as their non disabled peers. It supports and indeed praises the Disability Services Act and calls for, where possible, the integration of people with disabilities into the general workforce. However, it also recognises that for some people with disabilities open employment may not be appropriate. For these people it commends the wide range of long term supported employment models detailed in the Act.

In noting the difficulties encountered by people with disabilities seeking employment, the Labour Council calls for an increase in both numbers and expertise of staff within the Commonwealth Employment Service to cater for the employment needs of people with disabilities. It also calls for a campaign by the Department of Employment, Education and Training to increase employer willingness to employ people with disabilities and an increased effort by this department to maintain adequate statistics of numbers of people with disabilities seeking and/or finding employment.

The Labour Council has also called for trade unions to encourage all workers (both in supported and open employment settings) to participate as members of the appropriate generic union. It would not apparently endorse a separate union for those workers with disabilities in places of supported employment. It further calls for trade unions to provide support and assistance so that workers with disabilities can become fully involved on an equal basis with fellow workers. the nature of such encouragement, support and assistance is not made clear, nor are the means by which they might be given made clear. Perhaps this is an area in which the Labour Council might consider investing extra effort to enhance the already considerable efforts they have made towards the vocational well-being of people with disabilities.



### Employers Federation of NSW

The Employers Federation does not have a formal policy on the employment of people with disabilities. Rather it leaves this matter to be decided on by individual employers or employer groups. Indeed this organisation may be a very good starting point to initiate programs aimed at increasing employer awareness of the benefits to be gained by considering people with disabilities in their pool of job applicants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES  
FROM SELECTED ORGANISATIONS

The following trends emerging from the survey data were discussed with these representatives:

- . employer attitudes towards employing people
- . employment of people with disabilities in an environment of high unemployment
- . profile of competitive employment agencies for people with disabilities
- . interagency cooperation
- . community attitudes towards people with disabilities
- . parents and service providers working together for the benefit of the worker with a disability
- . vocational options for people with severe disabilities
- . development of work-related behaviours
- . staffing of vocational facilities for people with disabilities
- . financial disincentives of government benefits
- . participation of people with disabilities in training schemes for young people in general
- . the role of the school in preparing young people with disabilities for adult life

The results from these interviews are presented below.

1. EMPLOYER ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

The majority of people interviewed felt that employers in general are not receptive towards the employment of young people with disabilities. It seems some employers are either ignorant of the issues concerning people with disabilities, or are not well informed about disabilities (e.g. some employers have difficulties in comprehending the difference between mental and intellectual disabilities). Some fear having to cope with a disabled worker. The interviewees felt this fear was possibly based on the employer's concern about safety, insurance, workers compensation, and the effect the worker with a disability might have on other nondisabled staff.

Some employers were, however, receptive towards employing a worker with a disability, but only for a period of work experience. Thus, they were quite reluctant to retain the person on a permanent basis.

**Action Needed to Make Employers More Receptive Towards Employing  
People with Disabilities**

Education program for employers and the community in general. Many people with disabilities have worthwhile work skills that can be used to complete work tasks properly and successfully. Employers also need to be

educated on the possibilities of redesigning jobs and/or equipment to suit a worker with a disability. Trainers could also educate employers about the disability of their trainee and how it affects the person and his/her work.

Better marketing of workers with disabilities. Many of the interviewees felt that agencies dealing with the employment of people with disabilities need to promote their clients more effectively. These agencies should sell the disabled person on his/her capabilities and skills rather than as a "charity case". They should emphasise that the person can make a valid contribution to the company, and highlight the benefits to be gained by the employer (e.g. long-term employee who may be prepared to do mundane, routine jobs). Employers may also become more receptive if they are made aware that the agencies will provide full training for the person with a disability

Educational, promotional material should be given to business groups, Chambers of Commerce, and to students in personnel training courses at Universities and other tertiary institutions. One interviewee felt that education of this last group may help to develop positive attitudes towards disabled workers in the management of the future.

Greater awareness of the services, facilities and organizations that provide special equipment for disabled workers. A booklet listing these services should be prepared and distributed to all employers.

Work Experience Programs. One interviewee suggested that well supported work experience programs would help to demonstrate to employers that people with disabilities can acquire work skills. In addition, work experience in competitive employment should be made available to disabled students at school. Such experience may assist them to find long-term employment in the future.

### Incentives

There was a mixed reaction to the suggestion of financial incentives for employers who employ a worker with a disability. Some interviewees felt that incentives would be good, while others felt they could become a problem if they were not managed carefully. In addition, it was felt that employers may terminate the services of an employee once the financial payment ceased.

### Responsibility for promoting change in employer's attitudes

- The Department of Employment, Education and Training, and the Department of Industrial Relations and Employment must play their roles in promoting the employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Equal Employment Opportunity coordinators should organise education courses within existing organisations, both in the public and private sectors.
- Government is responsible for legislation and for providing the mechanisms for implementing the legislation. The government should also provide subsidies to help with the purchase of work equipment to

assist a disabled worker. Governments should also be encouraged to look at the percentages of disabled people being employed and could perhaps legislate on targets or quotas to be achieved.

- Everyone involved with disabled people is responsible for promoting attitude change - eg. service providers, program coordinators, advocacy groups.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF HIGH GENERAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Most of the interviewees found this issue quite difficult to address. However, some of the suggestions were:

- the employment of disabled people tends not to be part of the normal labour market. Therefore, jobs may be found through personal approaches to employers rather than by replying to newspaper advertisements.
- Disabled people from the country could be moved to the city where job prospects are better.
- People with disabilities should be encouraged to participate in labour market programs available to help unemployed people in general.
- The Commonwealth Employment Service should provide additional assistance and resources to help people with disabilities obtain suitable employment.

## 3. PROFILE OF COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The majority of interviewees felt that the agencies concerned with the employment of people with disabilities need to make some improvements to their services. Some suggestions were:

- the agencies need to be more professional when making approaches to employers.
- The Commonwealth Employment Service and Department of Employment, Education and Training should be encouraged to assist these agencies by providing information on how to deal with employers.

The agencies should assist established community groups and representative bodies to address the issue of employment of people with disabilities

- more money is needed for the agencies to market and publicise their services

However, a major problem outlined by the interviewees was the difficulty arising from agencies' dependence on government funding. This funding is based on the number of placements into competitive employment made by the agency. Thus agencies may often expend a disproportionate part of

their energies into placement work to the neglect of necessary promotional work with employers.

The interviewees were also asked how competitive employment agencies could promote their clients more effectively. The major suggestions are listed below.

- approach employer groups, small business associations, local Chambers of Commerce, productivity groups, colleges, universities, trade union movements, and provide positive information about clients.
- agencies should not be selective, but should assist all people regardless of disability

#### 4. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF APPROACHES TO EMPLOYERS

Most of the people interviewed agreed that competitive employment agencies catering for people with disabilities should cooperate and coordinate their activities. They need to recognize that they are all doing similar jobs and, therefore, should use each other's resources to collectively open the doors for disabled clients. However, cooperation between these agencies may be difficult, due to the funding issue where agencies are more concerned about numbers of clients placed in jobs. Perhaps changes to the funding system may promote better cooperation. Another suggestion was that general employment agencies could coordinate with disabled agencies to provide suggestions on dealing with employers. These generic agencies may also be encouraged to find work for disabled people if some funding for this purpose was available.

Other advantages of interagency cooperation were:

- reduced administrative and research costs
- groundwork would be shared
- greater sharing of knowledge
- collective use of strengths
- provision of better services

However, one interviewee felt that agencies should not cooperate, but should be competitive with each other as are generic agencies. It was suggested that, if the agencies were to become more professional, then cooperation would have to cease.

#### 5. COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE

The interviewees were of the opinion that community attitudes were very similar to employer attitudes (i.e. ignorance - not knowing how to interact with people with disabilities and, therefore, not knowing what to expect from a disabled person). This ignorance and fear seems to have been brought about by the trend in the community to hide disabled people away. The community also seems to have difficulty in distinguishing between various disabilities. Good community education programs are urgently needed so that people with disabilities will be accepted and, indeed, welcomed as part of their local community.

### Action Needed to Make Community More Receptive

- ensure that more disabled people are exposed to the general community, and are encouraged to join community groups. This will enable the community to see, meet, and interact with people with disabilities to minimize feelings of apprehension.
- tackle each community on a local level through its networks such as Neighbourhood Watch, leisure groups, and social organisations. It is easier to change the attitudes of a small group rather than the attitudes of entire communities immediately.
- the media should depict disabled people as being part of the community rather than "struggling in an able-bodied world".
- government support is needed to legislate for all community buildings to have access for people with disabilities.

### Responsibility for Promoting Change in Community Attitudes

- Service providers must be strong advocates for people with disabilities.
- governments are responsible to ensure that relevant legislation and support are available.
- community itself must meet the challenge of accepting people with disabilities.
- medical profession needs to accept that the needs of people with disabilities can, in many cases, be met by local generic services.

### 6. PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKER WITH A DISABILITY

Parents should be given ample information regarding the program their child is participating in. The goals of the program should be made clear to them, as well as opportunities given to discuss any concerns which they might have. Parents could become more involved in their son or daughter's program by being a part of the management or decision-making body.

Different service providers, along with parents, should work together for benefit of the disabled person. Each service should be part of an individual program plan for the young person's life. All services should coordinate with each other to fit into the plan (i.e. work, leisure, living skills, etc.).

Services representing all areas of the person's life should coordinate their efforts to more readily ensure a high quality of life for that person.

The majority of interviewees agreed that many parents are reluctant to accept their disabled child's capabilities as a worker. Some of the comments made in this regard were:

- many parents are unwilling to accept that their son or daughter has a life independent of theirs. Thus they keep him or her at home, or in a sheltered workshop, which they feel is safer and more secure.
- many parents are overprotective because they feel guilty for bringing a child with a disability into the world. They restrict their son or daughter's activities because they do not want him/her to fail.
- the medical profession often does not instill enough confidence in parents to be positive about the capabilities of their son or daughter with a disability.

#### **Action Needed to Change Parents' Attitudes**

- proper counselling and early intervention - educate parents from the beginning about the capabilities of their child.
- parents should meet successful disabled workers and their parents to discuss concerns and feelings.
- attempt to reduce child's dependence on parents and encourage parents to adopt the same responsibility and relationship with the disabled child as they have with their other children.
- parents need to understand that their son or daughter needs independence which means allowing him/her to fail sometimes as well as succeed.

#### **People Responsible for Changing Parental Attitudes**

- self-help parent groups
- medical profession
- welfare workers, social workers, occupational therapists
- schools

### **7. VOCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES**

- People with severe disabilities need good quality, long-term supported employment with opportunities for community integration. However, this option will only be a real work setting if the people are treated as workers, valued as workers, and given the respect they deserve. Another possibility could be community volunteer work, where they are away from home and doing something valuable for the community.

#### **The Disability Services Act and the Vocational Needs of People with Disabilities**

Every interviewee agreed that the Disability Services Act could not meet the vocational needs of people with severe disabilities and that the legislation had caused these people to be placed in the "too hard basket". Other problems highlighted were:

- the Act is intended to be flexible, but in many instances it is quite restrictive.
- service providers are being faced with major changes, but are unsure as to how to change, and are not given proper guidelines on transition plans.



- the present Department of Community Services and Health funding does not allow for independent living skills programs to be a replacement for Adult Training Centres - this is very limiting and focuses on employment as an eventual outcome. This may not be an appropriate option for many people attending these facilities.

## 8. DEVELOPMENT OF WORK RELATED BEHAVIOURS

All interviewees agreed that disabled clients obtained work skills, but lacked work-related behaviour and/or social skills. A few interviewees felt this was due to the lack of involvement with the community and their sheltered environment.

Some suggestions for addressing this issue were:

- vocational programs need to be broadened to concentrate on both work skills and work-related behaviours.
- sheltered workshops should function like a work environment and encourage the development of appropriate work behaviours.
- behaviour should be dealt with by the trainer a short time before placement and then throughout initial employment.
- trainers should identify behaviours needed in a particular work setting, then deal with person's behaviour to improve it.

Types of skills needing to be taught

- development of self-esteem and confidence
- interpersonal skills, communication
- travel training, social integration, eye contact, table manners, purchase of food.
- hygiene, appropriate dress

## 9. STAFFING OF VOCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The majority of interviewees agreed that staff numbers in programs were adequate for supervision, but inadequate for training of workers with disabilities. Suggestions for addressing this issue are as follows:

- rearranging existing resources
- existing staff need to be trained to be better trainers. Some programs have adequate staff numbers, but inadequately trained staff.
- staff should be trained to do a variety of work. Staff should not be so specialized that they can only cater for a select group of inquiries, tasks or workers.

- programs should recognize the possibility of using peripheral staff (e.g. managers or secretaries) to assist with supervision and training.

#### 10. FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVES OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

Every interviewee agreed that the pension and its associated benefits act as a disincentive to young people with disabilities wanting to earn a reasonable wage. Suggested ways of combatting this problem were:

- disabled people need to be given the opportunity to return to the pension if the job proves unsatisfactory.
- possibility of disabled child entering paid work on leaving school before going on pension (i.e. try employment before entering pension cycle).
- encourage people with disabilities that work is a viable option for them.
- the disabled worker needs an employment option with the benefits that a pension provides (e.g. transport, equipment, attendant care, etc.).
- people need to recognize the non-monetary benefits of working (e.g. integration, social contact, etc.).
- if wages are less than pension, subsidy should be available to bring wage up to level of previous pension.

#### 11. PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN TRAINING SCHEMES AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN GENERAL

Interviewees were asked to suggest ways of encouraging more young disabled people to participate in government training schemes being offered to young people in general. Some of the suggestions were:

- more flexible programs to cater for people with disabilities (e.g. better physical access).
- disabled youth often have no knowledge of these programs. Therefore the schemes need to be better publicised and promoted.
- the schools should promote the training programs as a viable option for people with disabilities.
- need to train the people who conduct the courses on means to cater for needs of disabled people within the course. These people need to be more willing to accept people with disabilities participating in their programs.

#### 12. ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR ADULT LIFE

Interviewees were asked for suggestions of ways in which schools could prepare disabled students for adult life.

The following suggestions were made:

- more work experience throughout high school years, not just in last year.
- encourage many opportunities for integration into the wider community.
- provide the student with a disability with range of vocational options rather than limiting their choice to sheltered employment.
- Government departments need to work more closely with careers advisers to alert them to career prospects for students with disabilities and advise them of appropriate community support agencies
- careers advisers need to recognize the critical role they play in the life of a student with a disability.
- service providers need to visit schools to promote their services.
- work related skills need to be included in the high school curriculum.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the information on vocational options for young people with disabilities received from this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) There is an urgent need for effective programs alerting employers to the benefits of including young people with disabilities in their selection of applicants. Both government and nongovernment agencies must collaborate to devise the most effective means to develop and implement these programs. The impetus towards encouraging people with disabilities to participate in competitive employment may well founder if employers are unwilling to consider them as suitable employees.
- 2) The increasing number of young people with disabilities has not been matched by an increase in staff and resources of the Commonwealth Employment Service, one of the major agencies through which these young people obtain employment. This situation requires urgent attention.
- 3) The role which could profitably be played by private employment agencies needs to be examined. They represent an untapped source of assistance for young people with disabilities entering competitive employment.
- 4) Programs assisting young people with disabilities enter competitive employment need to focus on ensuring that these people maintain their employment. Research, both locally and overseas, indicates that frequently these young people have more difficulty maintaining a position than they do in actually obtaining it. Thus resources need to be available to provide such ongoing support for as long as required. Further, the definition of successful outcome in these programs needs not only to reflect whether the young person with a disability was placed into a position, but also whether the young person stayed in that position for an acceptable length of time. In many programs additional staff may be required solely to provide such ongoing support.
- 5) In many programs, both government and nongovernment, record keeping was very poor. Mechanisms must be put in place to establish systems by which appropriate records may be kept. Without such records, meaningful program evaluations cannot be conducted, nor can sound administrative, training or program decisions be made.
- 6) Currently the Department of Employment, Education and Training considers people with disabilities as part of a larger group of disadvantaged people. It is recommended that people with disabilities be considered as a distinct group. These people have vastly different needs from the other groups under the disadvantaged rubric. It is difficult to meet the needs of disparate groups meaningfully in such a fashion.

7. The Special Placements Programs within both the State and Australian Public Services must be maintained and expanded to enable applicants with disabilities to be recruited to positions other than the relatively narrow band of positions currently available.
8. Facilities catering for the vocational needs of young people with severe disabilities are grossly inadequate. The Department of Community Services and Health needs to determine how the needs of these people are to be met under the Disability Services Act and must envisage the provision of independent living skills or leisure skills programs as viable options for these people. Similarly, the NSW Department of Health should provide resources to ensure that vocational and/or living skills programs are available to the many young people with severe disabilities currently receiving no services or, at the most, part-time services only. Perhaps these 2 departments could coordinate their efforts in this regard.
9. Appropriate courses should be provided by the Department of Technical and Further Education facilities for young people with disabilities. These courses may centre around the development of independent living or leisure skills as well as vocational skills.
10. Technical and Further Education staff need to adopt a more flexible approach regarding mainstreaming students with disabilities or having them attend segregated classes. For some students, mainstreaming may be advantageous, for others segregation may be a preferable option. Individual student choice should always be taken into account.
11. There is a need for improvement in the dissemination of information regarding the requirements of the Disability Services Act to relevant organisations. More open consultation between the Department of Community Services and Health and these organisations is needed to ensure a smoother transition to the new vocational models outlined in the legislation than it seems is currently the case.
12. The role to be played by unions in ensuring that young workers with disabilities receive similar benefits and conditions to their nondisabled workmates needs to be pursued, both by the relevant unions, the ACTU and the NSW Labour Council. Of particular significance is the role which unions must play in traditional sheltered employment and the supported employment options outlined in the Disability Services Act.
13. Agencies providing vocational services to young people with disabilities should ensure that information regarding their services is disseminated to schools and other relevant agencies. Visits to school counsellors and students with disabilities during their final years at school would be particularly advantageous
14. Each student with a disability should have an Individual Transition Plan in place 2 or 3 years before leaving school to ensure that transition from school to adult life is as smooth as possible. To achieve this transition, planning structures need to be put in place by the NSW Department of Education and all other relevant agencies. It is pleasing to note that, to this end, a pilot program is beginning early in 1989.

15. An increased emphasis needs to be placed on the development and implementation of staff training programs in both government and nongovernment agencies providing services to meet the vocational needs of young people with disabilities.
16. There is an urgent need for greater cooperation and coordination between agencies concerned with meeting the needs of young people with disabilities. Such cooperation and coordination are needed to avoid duplication of services and also to ensure that all areas of the young person's life are met.

Cooperation and coordination are also needed between generic and specialist agencies. This would lead to a sharing of and growth of knowledge on the part of parties from quite different backgrounds. It would also ensure that the young person receives the specialist support he/she may need, but in the environment of a generic community-based agency.

A recent example of such coordination and cooperation is the joint sponsoring of a traineeship in the State Public Service by the Department of Employment, Education and Training, and the Special Placements Program in the NSW Department of Industrial Relations and Employment.

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APPENDIX A  
ARF AND CID Publicity  
Questionnaires and Interview Schedule



## UNIT FOR REHABILITATION STUDIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

North Ryde New South Wales 2113 Australia Phone (02) 88-9530  
Telegraphs & Telex: MACQUNI AA22377 Fax: (02) 887-4752

NSW, 2109, Australia. (02) 805-8706

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The Unit for Rehabilitation Studies at Macquarie University has been funded by the Disabilities Services Coordination Unit of the Premier's Department to conduct a study investigating the postschool vocational options for young people with disabilities. During the coming weeks either Deborah Gold or Marie Knox from the Unit will be contacting organizations providing vocational services asking to discuss such issues as:

- the numbers and types of vocational services currently being provided
- the clients for whom services are being provided
- payments made to the client and by the client
- service providers' views on areas of need
- any other issues you may wish to raise

Of course, all information is strictly confidential and the name of your organization will not be recorded in the study.

However, it is anticipated that information collected will be disseminated so that young people with disabilities and their families will more readily be able to access available services. As well, recommendations addressing currently unmet needs of these young people and their families will also be made in order to alert the appropriate government agencies.

We hope you see the importance of the study and will assist the researchers in their efforts.

TREVOR R. PARMENTER, Ph.D.,  
Associate Professor

50.  
POSTSCHOOL OPTIONS STUDY

Questionnaire to Labour Market Program Agencies

1. Could you describe the function of your organization?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Is your organization a government or non-government body?

☐ government

☐ non-government

3. How many people aged between 16 and 20 years with disabilities are being served or have been served by your organization in the last 12 months? ☐

4. What disabilities do these young people have?

☐ Problems with reading and writing

☐ Slow to understand instructions

☐ Wheelchair bound

☐ Limited mobility

☐ Visual impairment

☐ Hearing impairment

☐ Behavioural/emotional problems

☐ Language difficulties

☐ Other, please specify .....

5. How many of these young people were placed into either full or part-time positions? ☐

What types of jobs were they placed into?

.....

6. Was support from your organization needed to help these young people maintain the job you helped them to obtain? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, could you describe the functions of this person?

.....

7. Does your organization employ staff specifically to cater for the vocational needs of disabled people? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, could you describe the functions of this person?

.....

8. Could you describe what problems, if any, your organization might experience or has experienced placing young people with disabilities into appropriate vocational settings?

.....  
.....

How do you suggest these problems may be overcome?

.....  
.....

General comment:

Thankyou for your assistance

## POSTSCHOOL OPTIONS STUDY

Questionnaire to Service Providers

1. Could you describe the nature of the vocational program provided by your organization for (young) people with disabilities?

.....  
 .  
 .....

2. What are the criteria for a person's acceptance into your program?

.....  
 .....  
 ; .

3. How many people with disabilities aged between 16 and 20 years does your program currently serve? ☐

4. What are the main disabilities of these young people?

- ☐ autistic  
☐ mild intellectual disability  
☐ moderate intellectual disability  
☐ severe intellectual disability  
☐ physical disability  
☐ emotional disturbance  
☐ visual impairment  
☐ hearing impairment  
☐ other, please specify .....

5. What is the average weekly pay of these young workers in your organization?

- ☐ Less than \$5  
☐ \$5 - \$20  
☐ \$21 - \$50  
☐ \$51 - 100  
☐ More than \$100

6. Do people with disabilities pay fees to attend the program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, could you indicate weekly fee?

☐ Less than \$10

☐ \$10 - \$29

☐ \$30 - \$49

☐ \$50 - \$69

☐ More than \$70

7. How many referrals aged between 16 and 20 were made to your program from January 1, 1987, to December 31, 1987? ☐

What were the main sources of these referrals?

☐ person him or herself

☐ person's family

☐ person's previous school

☐ an employment agency

☐ a government authority. Please specify which one(s) . . . . .

. . . . .

☐ other, please specify . . . . .

How many of these referrals were accepted? ☐

How many were rejected? ☐

What were the reasons for their rejection? ☐

☐ unsuitable for the program

☐ transport difficulties

☐ no vacancies in the program

☐ other, please specify . . . . .

8. How many people aged 16-20 left your program between January 1, 1987, and December 31, 1987? ☐

What were the main reasons for their leaving?

- ☐ unsuitable for program
- ☐ did not like program
- ☐ found another job
- ☐ completed program
- ☐ other, please specify . . . . .

9. Could you indicate the numbers of workers aged between 16 and 20 years involved in the following options?

. on-site bench work

What jobs do these people perform?

. work crews

What jobs do these people perform?

. enclaves

What jobs do these people perform?



. supported open employment

What types of jobs do these people perform?

. unsupported open employment

What types of jobs do these people perform?

10. What level of staff supervision or support is provided for these young people?

.....  
 .....

Do you consider this level of support is adequate    Yes ☐    No ☐

Could you give your reasons?

.....  
 .....

11. What is the program's definition of a "successful vocational placement"?

.....  
 .....

12. Do you have a waiting list of people wishing to attend your program?

Yes ☐

No ☐

13. What do you consider the main benefits to be gained by a young disabled person attending your program?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

14. What do you consider are impediments to young people in your program gaining and maintaining appropriate vocational placement?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Do you have suggestions as to how these may be overcome?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

General Comments:

Thankyou for your assistance.

## POSTSCHOOL VOCATIONAL OPTIONS STUDY

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How have you found employers' attitudes towards the employment of young people with disabilities?
2. If employer attitudes are negative, how would you suggest employers become more receptive towards employing these people?

- education programs
- incentives

Who should be responsible for promoting this change?

3. How should the issue of employment of young disabled people be addressed in an environment of high general unemployment?
4. Is there a need for agencies concerned with the employment of young disabled people to take a higher profile with community employers?

How should agencies promote their clients more effectively?

5. Is there a need for greater interagency co-operation to avoid duplication of approaches to employers?

What might be other advantages of interagency cooperation?

6. How have you found community attitudes towards young people with disabilities working in community-based employment?

7. If community attitudes are negative, how would you suggest the community becomes more receptive towards disabled people being an integral part of it?

- education programs
- exposure

Who should be responsible for promoting this change?

8. What are your views on many service providers' opinions that parents tend not to accept their disabled child's capability as a worker?

How might parental attitudes be changed?

Who should be responsible for promoting this change?

How might parents/families and vocational program staff be encouraged to work together for the benefit of the disabled worker?

9. How might the Disability Services Act or changes in NSW Health Department policy affect how service providers can best meet the vocational needs of people with severe disabilities?

- good quality long-term supported employment
- recreation/leisure programs

How might these options be most appropriately structured?

10. One of the major impediments to obtaining appropriate work appears to be clients' lack of job-related behaviours and/or social skills. Comment.

What skills should be taught and how do you suggest these be developed?

- types of programs
- types of staff

11. Looking at the issue of staff in general, many service providers feel there are inadequate staff resources to ensure appropriate training occurs. Comment.

How can this issue be addressed?

- re-allocating of resources
- changing roles of existing staff
- increased staff training
- additional staff

12. Do you feel the income restriction of and the perceived benefits offered by the invalid pension act as a disincentive to young people with disabilities wanting to earn a reasonable wage?

If so, how might this anomaly be addressed?

13. What are the means of encouraging more young people with disabilities to participate in either government or non-government training schemes being offered to young people in general?

- modification to schemes
- wider publicity of the schemes
- specific targetting of young people with disabilities

14. How might schools prepare young people with disabilities for postschool and adult life?